Chapter 2
Force Structure Summary

Background

Public Law 101-510 required the Secretary of Defense to submit to the Congress and to the Commission a force structure plan for fiscal years 1992 through 1997. The Secretary submitted the plan to Congress on March 19, 1991, and to the Commission on March 23, 1991.

The force structure plan incorporates an assessment by the Secretary of the probable threats to the national security during the FY92-97 period and takes account of the anticipated levels of funding for this period. The plan comprises three sections:

- The military threat assessment,
- The need for overseas basing, and
- The force structure, including the implementation plan.

The force structure plan is classified SECRET. What follows is an unclassified summary of the plan.

Military Threat Assessment

For 40 years, the Soviet Union and its surrogates posed the principal threat to U.S. interests and objectives. However, America's security agenda is being rewritten because of the collapse of East European communism, the demise of the Warsaw Pact, ongoing changes within the Soviet Union, the reshaping of U.S.-Soviet relationships, and a reduction in Soviet conventional military power. This redefinition of our threat perception has been accelerated by the emergence and intensification of both new and historical regional quarrels; one of which has already brought the United States into armed conflict in the Persian Gulf. Threats to U.S. interests range from the enmity of nations like North Korea and Cuba, to pressures from friend and foe alike to reduce U.S. presence around the world.

In addition, our efforts to promote regional stability and to enhance the spread of democracy will continue to be challenged by insurgencies and terrorism.

Threats

Even with the promise of a greatly reduced Soviet force posture in Eastern Europe, certain crucial constants endure in our long-term assessment of Soviet military capability and global threats.

- The Nuclear Threat. The most enduring concern for U.S. leadership is that the Soviet Union remains the one country in the world capable of destroying the United States with a single devastating attack. However, the rationale for such an attack is difficult to construe. Nevertheless, until and unless the Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal is vastly modified, the cornerstone of U.S. military strategy must continue to be a modern, credible, flexible and survivable nuclear deterrent force.

- The Conventional Threat. Even though Soviet military power is reducing and changing in form and purpose, the Soviet state still will have millions of well armed men in uniform and will remain the strongest military force on the Eurasian landmass. As leader of the Free World, the United States must maintain, in conjunction with our allies, the conventional capability to counterbalance the might of the Soviet Union's huge conventional forces.

Across the Atlantic

Looking eastward from our Atlantic shore, the focus of U.S. security concern has shifted from Western Europe to the defense of both Europe and the Persian Gulf. With respect to Europe, the demise of the Warsaw Pact, Soviet retrenchment within its borders, German unification, and the prospect of economic integration embody the success of collective defense, as well as the imperatives for new approaches to collective security. Although the prospect of a concerted military threat to Western Europe from the east has faded dramatically, continuing political and economic instability in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union presents new concerns. Consequently,

we and our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners are conducting a thorough review of alliance strategy. The broad outlines of a new force posture are already emerging and include highly mobile units, some of which will be restructured into multi-national formations. The number of active units will be scaled back, and increasing reliance will be placed on mobilization and reconstitution.

Looking across the Mediterranean to the Middle East and Persian Gulf, regional threats to U.S. vital interests and enduring obligations will place continuing demands on our Armed Forces. Escort operations in the Persian Gulf, conducted for over 2 years, established the precedent of U.S. military intervention to protect the free flow of oil. Then, just as the Soviet and the Iran-Iraq war receded as threats to regional stability, Iraq emerged from 8 years of war with a fanatic zeal, a large arsenal, a shattered economy, overwhelming foreign debts, and a trumped-up quarrel with Kuwait. Even though Iraq has been ejected from Kuwait by the United Nations-sponsored and U.S. led international coalition, the region still faces an uncertain future. We will maintain our commitment and expect to significantly reduce, but not entirely eliminate, our forces in this region.

- Immediate security concerns for many nations in Southwest Asia will be lessened because of the resounding defeat of the Iraqi military during Operation Desert Storm. Over the longer term, however, a number of problems including the prospect of Iraqi rearmament, the Arab-Israeli peace process, and subsequent reconfiguration of regional security arrangements and relationships will complicate defense planning and shape strategic choices for all parties in the region.

- While Iraq will require perhaps a decade to rebuild its military capabilities to pre-hostilities levels, Baghdad will likely remain a disruptive political force in the region. The calculus of regional security will shift as Western coalition forces draw down and political leaders are challenged to construct a more stable and predictable regional environment. The prospect of regional instability will likely remain the chief cause of concern among most

political and military decisionmakers for at least the next 2 or 3 years.

Across the Pacific

The divided Korean peninsula stands in stark contrast to the dissipating Cold War in Europe. However, the U.S. security burden is being eased by the continuing surge of democracy, economic growth, and military capacity in South Korea. Our reassessment of regional security concerns concluded that the United States could undertake a prudent phased series of steps to reduce its force presence in Korea modestly--as well as in Japan and elsewhere in the Pacific--and could initiate a gradual transition toward a partnership in which Republic of Korea armed forces assume the leading role. Should deterrence fail, however, in-place and reinforcing U.S. forces would still be required. For the region as a whole, a modest level of U.S. military presence--principally maritime-- will be essential to preserve stability, encourage democracy, and deter aggression.

The Rest of the World

This broad characterization is not intended to either diminish or denigrate the importance of U.S. interests, friends, and allies in regions beyond Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific. Rather, the nature and urgency of threats beyond those especially compelling locales are such that the threats can be dealt with by a judicious mix of active forces adequate to protect the most vital U.S. interests and by units with specialized capabilities and mobility for crises at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. The more important point is that many regional disputes are becoming increasingly lethal with the proliferation of advancing technological weapons.

The Need for Overseas Basing

In August 1990, the President, while speaking of our changing defense strategy, said: "Our new strategy must provide the framework to guide our deliberate reductions to no more forces than we need to guard our enduring interests - the forces to exercise forward presence in key areas, to respond effectively to crises, to retain the national capacity to rebuild our forces should this be needed . . . and to . . . maintain an effective deterrent." This strategy necessitates

maintaining a balance between Continental United States (CONUS) basing and overseas basing. To provide the foundation for any national military strategy, the military must maintain facilities in CONUS for active and reserve forces for such purposes as strategic offense, tactical warning and assessment of an attack on the United States, training, research and development, mobilization, maintenance and supply, homeporting, counterdrug operations, contingency planning, and day-to-day management of the various components of the military.

Balancing the need for CONUS facilities is the continuing need for robust, though reduced, forward presence. Overseas basing remains important to the execution of peacetime forward presence and to regional contingency operations during crises. Foreign bases enhance deterrence, contribute to regional stability, and facilitate rapid response by U.S. forces in meeting threats.

In both Europe and Asia, a continuing forward-deployed presence will be maintained in sufficient strength to deter aggression and fulfill mutual security treaty obligations. However, the rapidly changing security environment has dictated changes to the overseas deployments of American forces.

Europe

These changes will be most noticeable in Europe where a dramatic reduction in U.S. forward-based forces will occur. The United States will continue to maintain an appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear forces, modernized where necessary, to serve as the keystone to deterrence. The continuing U.S. presence there signifies our commitment to deter aggression and is vital to regional stability in an uncertain era of shifting military balances and political relationships. Similarly, our ability to reinforce Europe in a crisis and maintain the necessary and scaled-back but ready reception and basing facilities there, becomes increasingly important as our forward presence is reduced.

Middle East and Persian Gulf

In the Middle East and Persian Gulf, the United States and its allies will be best served by a continued, modest military presence within the region. We have an enduring commitment to this region requiring us to restore and preserve regional stability. It has become increasingly clear that the traditional terms of American presence in the Gulf region have been forever transformed and future events in this region will shape the nature of U.S. presence.

Asia

In Asia, where potential regional aggressors have long presented a more likely threat to stability than has superpower competition, some reductions will occur. A 10 to 12 percent reduction by the end of 1992 in the 135,000 personnel currently forward-deployed in Asia is already underway. The U.S. presence at bases in Japan, Korea, and the Philippines has historically been accepted and generally welcomed as a significant contribution to regional stability. Even if the U.S. basing structure in the region experiences changes in the years to come, continuing U.S. presence and access to the region will remain important to preserve strategic interests and regional stability.

The Force Structure

Reflecting the reduced chance of global conflicts, the President's FY 1992-1993 budget (and its accompanying Future Years Defense Program (FYDP)) includes reductions in the U.S. force structure that continues a prudently phased plan for reaching the force targets established for the new strategy and threat projections. By the end of 1995, U.S. forces will approximate those targets and be well below FY 1990 levels. The FY 1995 force will also be substantially restructured so as to support the new strategy most effectively and efficiently.

Strategic forces are programmed to be scaled back in accordance with expectations regarding arms reductions agreements and to enable the Department of Defense to maintain credible strategic deterrence at the least cost. Retirement of the MINUTEMAN II force will begin in 1992. Retirements of submarines with the POSEIDON missile will be accelerated. During the 1990s, the current mix of 34 POSEIDON and TRIDENT submarines will be reduced to a force of 18

TRIDENT submarines. Air Force strategic bombers will decrease from 268 in 1990 to 181 in 1995.

Conventional forces will be restructured to include significant airlift and sealift capabilities, substantial and highly effective maritime and amphibious forces, a sophisticated array of combat aircraft, special operations forces, Marine Corps divisions, and heavy and light Army divisions.

Compared to 1990 force levels, by the end of FY 1995 the Army will have 6 fewer active divisions; the Navy will have 94 fewer battle force ships, 1 less aircraft carrier and 2 fewer carrier air wings; and, the Air Force will have 10 fewer tactical fighter wings.

Forces
(By Fiscal Year)

	FY 90	FY 93	FY 95
ARMY DIVISIONS			
Active	18	14	12
Reserve(Cadre)	10(0)	8(0)	6(2)
MARINE CORPS DIVISIONS			
Active	3	3	3
Reserve	1	1	1
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS	13	13	12
CARRIER AIR WINGS			
Active	13	11	11
Reserve	2	2	2
BATTLE FORCE SHIPS	545	464	451
TACTICAL FIGHTER WINGS			
Active	24	16	15
Reserve	12	12	11
STRATEGIC BOMBERS	268	171	181

DoD Personnel
(End Strength in thousands)

	FY 90	FY 93	FY 95
ACTIVE DUTY			
Army	751	618	536
Navy	583	536	510
Marine Corps	197	182	171
Air Force	539	458	437
TOTAL	2,070	1,794	1,654
RESERVES	1,128	989	906
CIVILIANS	1,073	976	940